

EDINA PARK BOARD
7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MAY 8, 2001

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom White, Floyd Grabiell, Dave Fredlund, Karla Sitek, Andy Finsness, Mike Damman, Ardis Wexler

MEMBERS ABSENT: Linda Presthus, John Murrin, George Klus

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

OTHERS PRESENT: Doug Nesson, Art Cobb, Amy Demarest, Bill Moir, Brad Bolin, Susie Baker, Bob Mayo, Bright Dornblaser

I. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 10, 2001 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Floyd Grabiell MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 10, 2001 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Mike Damman SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. PRIORITY USE OF EDINA'S SCHEDULED OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Mr. Keprios thanked all of the representatives from the athletic associations who were in attendance at the Park Board meeting.

Mr. Keprios explained that the reason the Park Board has been looking at having this document for the last couple of months is because there have been some problems in the past. He indicated that a few years ago a group of soccer players demanded access to facilities that already had soccer scheduled there and were told that the Edina Soccer Association had priority. He stated that they asked to see it in writing to which it became an issue because there wasn't anything in writing and therefore they didn't have anything to fall back on. Mr. Keprios indicated that they are likely to run into something like this again and would like there to be something in writing.

Mr. Keprios indicated that the document would only refer to the outdoor scheduled facilities such as football, soccer, rugby, lacrosse, baseball and outdoor hockey rinks. He noted that the reason they included hockey is because there has been a lot of interest in outdoor ice time by groups other than the Edina Hockey Association. Mr. Keprios explained that there was a time when a group wanted to form their own hockey

association because they didn't like the way one of the hockey levels was formed and were demanding equal ice time.

Mr. Keprios went through the document and pointed out a few items that he felt should be addressed. He noted that the first item is #5 on page two which states "The election of the organization's governing body is to be a process which is open to all program participants". He indicated that currently most boards elect their incoming board members just by vote of the current board members and therefore he would like to hear some input from the associations on this issue.

Mr. Keprios indicated that it was brought to his attention that Priority #2 would be an issue for the Edina Hockey Association because at the National level there is a U19 program for the girls. Therefore, he noted that he doesn't see a problem in revising the age from 18 to 19.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that on page 4, item #6 the word personal should read personnel. He also noted that there may be some discussion from the Park Board regarding priority #4 and priority #5.

Park Board Chairman, Tom White, stated that the Park Board doesn't really have a lot of contact with the athletic associations, however, the Park Board sees itself as the supervisor of the athletic associations. He indicated that he hopes the associations haven't felt like the Park Board has been micromanaging them because that is not their intention. Mr. White pointed that they would like to have a policy in place in case another situation comes up such as those in the past. Therefore, he noted that the Park Board would like to hear some input from the athletic associations.

Art Cobb, Edina Hockey Association (EHA) board member, indicated that the Hockey Board felt the policy read very well, has a nice criteria and does fit Edina hockey. However, he would like to comment on a couple of things. First, as Mr. Keprios pointed out, the girls hockey program does have a U19 team and therefore the age would need to read 19 years of age instead of 18 years of age. He also noted that on page 3 at the bottom there is no number two, it goes from one to three so that needs to be corrected. Mr. Cobb informed the Park Board that in relation to page 6 where it talks about racial, ethnic, religious, etc. names he noted that EHA does use NHL teams and therefore one of teams is called the Blackhawks. He stated that if this is a problem for anyone it is obviously very easy to fix.

Mr. Cobb explained that EHA never had a democratic election until three or four years ago. At that time the EHA received some extreme pressure from USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey saying that in order to continue the sanction they had to have a democratic election. Therefore, they have changed their format and now hold a democratic election.

Amy Demarest, President of the Edina Girls Athletic Association (EGAA), indicated that the EGAA board briefly went through the document and noted that as far as holding an election they are lucky to have enough board members. Basically anyone who wants to be on the board can be. Ms. Demarest asked about publicizing their board meetings and asked if that is something Park and Recreation would do for them on the City web site because EGAA does not have a web site. Mr. Keprios responded that the City can definitely do that for them.

Ms. Demarest commented about the open process for parents to discuss their concerns and recommend changes to the organization and asked how formal of a policy is the Park Board looking for. Mr. Keprios replied they just want to be sure that the athletic association meetings are open to the public and if anyone comes forward with any ideas or suggestions the associations at least need to hear them out.

Ms. Demarest indicated that EGAA is also concerned about page 5, #3, where it states “If teams or organizations are at the same priority level, then the team or organization that serves the highest number of Edina residents will receive the higher priority status in terms of field, rink and court reservations”. She noted that they are concerned about their flag football because they will never have the same amount of participants as the boys flag football program. It was then explained that it is not the number of participants but the percentage of Edina residents. It was noted that point will need to be clarified.

Mr. Cobb indicated that on page 4, item 5 it states “Association is open to all Edina residents and must offer equal opportunities for participant.” He stated that from time to time they have had to exclude kids from hockey because of ability. He also commented that they have also had situations where a 13 year-old announces that he wants to play hockey for the first time and noted he will get hurt and therefore they cannot offer them the same opportunity to play. Mr. Keprios asked if for the kids who get cut there is still a program where they can be placed to which Mr. Cobb replied no. Mr. Cobb explained that a couple of years ago because of a structure mistake they had to cut 9 kids. However, ultimately they did find a place for 6 of them to play in St. Louis Park. He noted that chances are this is a situation that will happen again in the future. Mr. Keprios stated that he agrees you cannot have 22 kids on a hockey team and you cannot have 8 kids either. He asked Mr. Cobb if he would be willing to help him with language so that they can find some middle ground to which Mr. Cobb replied yes.

Bill Moir, Edina Soccer Club Board member, reminded everyone that the Soccer Club is a traveling program and that the caliber of athletes are typically a little more skilled and dedicated. Mr. Moir explained that not everyone who tries out for the Soccer Club makes a team. For the kids who do not make a team their application is passed on to the Edina Soccer Association which is the recreational house league program.

Mr. Moir pointed out that the Soccer Club does recruit players from the outside, they are allowed a specific number of non-resident players. He noted that they start recruiting players at age 11 on up. However, when they get into the premier level teams, which are

the elite players, they need to maintain a certain record in order to maintain the premier status. Mr. Moir pointed out that the Soccer Club is very serious. Mr. Keprios asked if the governing body at the state level are the ones who determine how many non-residents a city can draw from. Mr. Moir responded that at one time they did, however, that is not the case anymore. Mr. MacHolda pointed out that traveling soccer at both the state level and national level encourage ability based teams not community based teams. He indicated that with soccer there are two options, the traveling player that aspires to be premier Classic I and doesn't make it in Edina can try in a different town or they can drop down a level. Mr. Moir commented there is always a place to play soccer because there is the recreational house program.

Mr. Moir commented that the Soccer Club is very concerned about the condition of the soccer fields. He noted that some clubs did not want to play in Edina last year because the fields were so torn up and not safe.

Doug Nesson, Edina Football Association President, explained that their program is for grades 2nd through 8th. He noted that the 2nd and 3rd graders play flag football, 4th through 6th play in an in-house tackle program and 7th and 8th graders play in a southwestern 11-man football league. He indicated that there are approximately 600 to 650 participants in the football program and that their season is ten weeks long. Mr. Nesson stated that they are very fortunate to have such good participation as well as help from Mr. MacHolda on field scheduling.

Mr. Nesson suggested that perhaps as part of the scheduling arrangement for the athletic associations there should be a mandatory meeting. This meeting would give the associations a chance to work out scheduling issues especially if fields end up getting pulled out of use the next couple of years. Mr. Nesson indicated that the football program primarily uses the city facilities and they seldom use school facilities. Mr. White commented that he thinks that is a great idea and definitely something to think about.

Mr. MacHolda indicated that priority #8 is priority #2 only in a second season and noted that both recreational soccer and traveling soccer play a second season, the same season as football's only season. He stated that the fields need some time to rest we can't keep playing on them from the time the snow melts until it falls again. There needs to be a balance of when the associations play.

Mr. Keprios stated that the intent of the document is multiple. Number one is to protect the associations by being incorporated which offers some immunity by State law, number two is to protect our fields, and also define who has priority access to these public facilities. Also, it clearly states that we are in the business to provide recreational opportunities for residents, not non-residents.

Brad Bolin, Edina Girls Fastpitch President, explained that their only concern is they are a small organization (approximately 80 participants) and are only 20% to 25% of the slow pitch program and they want to make sure that they are able to maintain the amount of

space that they need. Mr. White indicated that it isn't the intent of the document to squeeze out any organization but that they are trying to set up a priority.

Mr. Keprios noted that on May 23rd at 6:00 p.m. the Local Government Information Systems (LOGIS) office in Golden Valley is going to offer a presentation on a software package where all of the associations could have their participants register on-line or by touch-tone phone. Ultimately it would be handled by the Park and Recreation staff. He added that there are a number of things that this software is capable to doing. Mr. Keprios indicated that he will see if there is enough interest from the athletic associations to do this.

Dave Fredlund MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL THE PROPOSED PRIORITY USE OF EDINA'S SCHEDULED OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES AND RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES SUBJECT TO SOME GRAMMATICAL CHANGES. Mike Damman SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. White pointed that it still needs to be decided on how we should handle the associations that cut kids. Ms. Sitek commented that when Mr. Cobb referred to kids that were cut a few years ago there was a place for them to go which was with kids from St. Louis Park. However, that wasn't acceptable to everyone.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he would like to work out some language that would basically state that none of the associations will accept non-resident talent at the expense of Edina talent. For example, an association cannot take a non-resident player because they are a better player therefore leaving a resident player with no place to play. If an association accepts non-residents, there always needs to be a place at some level for the resident player to play. Mr. White stated that currently on page 4, priority #2, part 5 states "Association is open to all Edina residents and must offer equal opportunities for participation". He suggested that it read "The associations must offer all Edina residents an opportunity to participate in the sport at some level". Mr. Keprios suggested that it read "The associations need to make every effort possible to provide an opportunity for Edina residents".

Mr. Grabiell commented that the document is not going to be able to cover absolutely every situation that can be thought of. He noted that the park and recreation staff is paid to exercise their discretion and as a board member he has full faith and confidence in the staff's abilities.

Mr. White noted that he would like to make an amendment which states THE ASSOCIATIONS ARE OPEN TO ALL EDINA RESIDENTS AND MUST OFFER EDINA RESIDENTS SOME OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SPORT. Andy Finsness SECONDED THE AMENDMENT.

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT, ALL IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION BY DAVID FREDLUND TO ADOPT IT SUBJECT TO SOME GRAMMATICAL CHANGES.

Mr. White noted he would also like to make some grammatical changes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

III. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES REFERENDUM UPDATE - JOHN KEPRIOS

Mr. Keprios indicated that a wonderful job was done in endorsing the referendum in the Sun Current Newspaper last week. He noted that John Sherman also spoke highly of it. Mr. Keprios stated that there is a lot of Vote Yes support out there, however, it's definitely not a slam dunk, it's going to be a close election and there is a lot of Vote No signs out there as well.

Mr. Keprios stated that if the referendum passes he would ask the Park Board to play a very important role of helping to prioritize what gets done first, second, third, etc. He noted that staff will have recommendations but that they would like help from the Park Board.

IV. OTHER

A. Park Board Tour - Mr. Keprios indicated that for the June 12th Park Board meeting they will be taking a tour and asked if the Park Board would like to start earlier to which it was noted it will remain a 7:00 p.m. start from City Hall with the first stop being the Aquatic Center. Mr. Keprios then asked the Park Board for suggestions of what else they would like to see on their tour. Mr. Finsness indicated he would like to see some of the problem areas to which Mr. MacHolda noted that Concord would be a good place because the green space is in terrible condition. However, the area right next to it between South View and the Community Center is a gorgeous green space and noted that the City is not allowed to use. The Park Board agreed they would rather see the problem areas. Mr. Keprios indicated that he will adjust the tour to show some of the problem areas such as Lewis Park, the High School and Braemar Park.

B. Iron Kids Triathlon - Mr. Keprios indicated that on Sunday August 19th they are hoping to host the Iron Kid's Triathlon special event. It's a swim, bike and run event for kids and they are currently in the process of seeing what kind of support they are going to get from the resident neighbors of the area. It was noted that the event is for 7 to 14 year-olds.

C. Braemar Gun Range Site - Mr. Finsness asked what the status is on the Park Board's recommendation regarding the Braemar Gun Range site. Mr. Keprios indicated that they have not yet seen the recommendation but will see it in the May Park Board minutes at the next City Council meeting. He noted there was only enough time between the Park Board meeting and City Council meeting to have the dog park part of the minutes done. He noted that the City Council accepted the Park Board's recommendation as well as added the amendment to continue to look at the Braemar site as a potential dog park site.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Ardis Wexler MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:30 P.M. Karla Sitek
SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.